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MONTHLY UPDATE

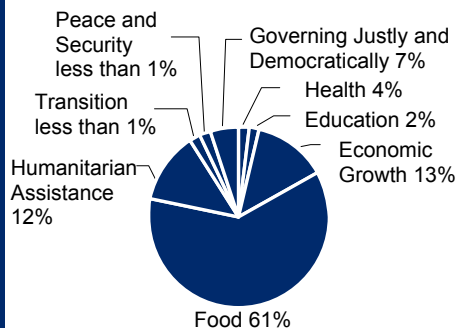
December 2010

USAID, UN Deliver Polling Materials for Southern Sudan Referendum

On December 23, USAID and the United Nations delivered to the Southern Sudan Referendum Commission—the official Sudanese body in charge of the referendum on southern Sudan's self-determination—polling kits and ballots to carry out the referendum, which is scheduled to take place January 9-15, 2011.



USAID Assistance to Sudan FY 2009



Peace and Security	\$6.7
Governing Justly and Democratically	\$72.7
Health	\$47.1
Education	\$25.5
Economic Growth	\$140.8
Food Aid	\$679.7*
Humanitarian Assistance	\$127.6*
Transition	\$4.3
TOTAL	\$1,104.4

Note: Amounts in millions

* Includes eastern Chad



Southern Sudan Referendum Commission Secretary General Mohamed El-Nojoumi displays an enlarged sample ballot December 23 in Khartoum that shows southern voters' choice of unity or secession. Photo: Mirella McCracken



USAID-provided referendum polling kits include materials needed to run a polling site, such as indelible ink, thumbprint pads, ballot box seals, and banners. Photo: Mirella McCracken

A key provision of the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) that ended the 22-year, north-south civil war, the referendum guarantees the people of southern Sudan the right of self-determination by choosing to remain part of a unified Sudan or secede and form an independent nation. USAID procured the polling kits, and the United Nations Development Program through a multi-donor basket fund procured the ballots, as part of their assistance to the Southern Sudan Referendum Commission to carry out the referendum.

The voter registration process ended December 22 with the completion of registration for eligible voters of southern Sudanese origin in the United States. Seven other countries with large southern Sudanese populations also registered voters—Australia, Canada, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, and the United Kingdom. In Sudan, voter registration ended December 8. ♦



Voter registration in Ikotos County, Eastern Equatoria state. Photo: Richard Ojara

USAID Assistant Administrator Visits Sudan

USAID Assistant Administrator for the Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance Nancy Lindborg visited Sudan December 7-15 to assess the humanitarian and conflict situation in the country and discuss major humanitarian issues with government officials, UN agencies, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and local leaders. Her itinerary included Khartoum, North and South Darfur, and Juba and Akobo towns in southern Sudan.

Assistant Administrator Lindborg joined U.S. Special Envoy to Sudan Scott Gration for the visit to Darfur, where they met with internally displaced person (IDP) camp leaders, civil society and women's groups, and representatives from the Government of Sudan, the UN, and NGOs.



USAID Assistant Administrator Nancy Lindborg with Darfuri children at the Otash camp for internally displaced persons outside Nyala, South Darfur. Photo: Doug Arbuckle

"I was particularly pleased that we had the chance to meet with a group of Darfuri women, self-described as the 'iron women of Darfur,'" she said during a press briefing from Juba.

"These women have sustained their families and communities through seven years of conflict and displacement, which is far too long for people to live in the uncertainty of IDP camps," she added.



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Lindborg noted that the women requested literacy classes and programs that will enable them to obtain skills to start small businesses. “As a result, I see islands of hope, islands of opportunity to help people take early steps towards rebuilding their livelihoods,” she said.

“We will continue to provide essential humanitarian assistance, but we will also look for all those opportunities to support—where it’s possible and where they choose—for Darfur citizens to return to their homes to move towards recovery and help them in their quest for a peaceful future,” she added.

Lindborg acknowledged that significant humanitarian needs remain in Darfur and affirmed USAID’s commitment to the people of Darfur, where some 2 million people are displaced.

In Akobo, Lindborg learned about USAID activities to reduce conflict among youth and assist displaced populations, and in Juba she met with leaders of the Government of Southern Sudan and participated in the launch of the USAID-funded Sudan Radio Service 98.6 FM station, which is increasing citizens’ access to news and information.♦

Sudan Radio Service 98.6 FM Officially Launched in Juba



USAID Assistant Administrator for the Bureau of Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance Nancy Lindborg was interviewed about her visit to Sudan by Victor Lugala, Deputy Chief of Party of Sudan Radio Service (SRS) during a broadcast on the official launch day for SRS 98.6 FM station in Juba. Photo: Jesse Brown



USAID/Sudan Mission Director Bill Hammink, USAID Assistant Administrator Nancy Lindborg and Government of Southern Sudan (GOSS) Ministry of Human Resources Development Undersecretary Angeth Acol De Dut discuss GOSS leadership December 13 in Juba. Photo: Jesse Brown

On December 14, the Sudan Radio Service (SRS) officially launched its radio station in Juba, 98.6 FM, in cooperation with the Government of Southern Sudan Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. SRS is funded by USAID and managed by the Education Development Center.

Through SRS, USAID is increasing Sudanese citizens’ access to quality and independent information. SRS produces and broadcasts daily news summaries and thematic programming in English, Arabic, and seven other local languages and operates nationwide. Through SRS’ Journalism Certificate Program at Juba University, USAID is helping to develop the professional skills of Sudanese journalists.

In March of this year, 98.6 SRS FM went on the air. Since then, the station has aired hundreds of public service announcements and news stories about Sudan’s national elections, voter registration for the January 2011 southern Sudan self-determination referendum, and other civic matters, and the stories have been picked up by other international and national media outlets including the BBC, Sudan Watch, and Uganda Watch.♦



Popular Consultations Launched in Blue Nile State



A woman provides her views on Sudan's Comprehensive Peace Agreement at the first in a series of public hearings in Blue Nile state. Photo: AECOM International Sudan

Sudan made progress toward fulfilling another major provision of the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) this month with the launch of the popular consultation process in Blue Nile state.

While the CPA stipulates that southern Sudanese vote on whether or not to secede from the north, it also specifies that Blue Nile and Southern Kordofan states are part of the north. Located on the north-south border, these two states were on the frontlines of the war, and their citizens had mixed loyalties—some aligned with the northern government and others with the southern rebel movement.

The agreement requires public hearings in the two states to determine the will of the citizens—whether they feel the peace agreement has adequately met their aspirations. If not, additional negotiations would proceed between the states' democratically elected state legislatures and the central government in Khartoum.

Popular consultations are significant because they provide a unique opportunity to instill civic participation into Sudan's public life, empowering citizens to understand their rights and responsibilities and make their opinions heard.

In Blue Nile, the process began with pilot citizen hearings in Damazin and Roseires December 12-13,

where 876 citizens registered to attend, and 288 of those expressed their opinions publicly. Participation among women was strong. The chair of the Commission encouraged women to come forward and minorities to speak in their own language—a positive sign that the state's diversity will be reflected in the consultations. Based on the success of the pilot hearings, USAID has approved funding for 115 more citizen hearings throughout Blue Nile by January.

In Southern Kordofan, popular consultations cannot begin until after state elections are held in 2011.

USAID has been helping Blue Nile and Southern Kordofan prepare for the popular consultations since 2008—providing logistical support, organizing civic education campaigns to inform citizens about the process, and taking community leaders on study tours to Indonesia and Kenya, which have conducted processes similar to popular consultations. Many citizens have incorrectly believed that the process includes a vote on secession, like the southern referendum, which highlights the importance of civic education so that citizens understand the process and their rights. ♦

USAID Responds to Humanitarian Needs of Sudanese Returning to the South



A World Food Program staff member registers new arrivals at the Jebel Kujur transit station near Juba, and provides food ration cards so returnees in transit can obtain food at their final destination. Photo: Laureen Reagan/USAID



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Outside the Jebel Kujur way station, returnees who do not need assistance with onward transportation exit after registration. Photo: Laureen Reagan/USAID

Thousands of internally displaced Sudanese continue to return to their areas of origin in southern Sudan and the Abyei area. As of December 21, the international humanitarian community had verified the arrival of more than 105,000 returnees to southern Sudan and Abyei from the north since October 30.

Roughly half of all returnees are traveling to their places of origin through government-organized returns programs conducted by the Southern Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (SSRRC), Unity state, and the Abyei Area Administration. Additional returnees are traveling to their places of origin spontaneously or without assistance. USAID is collaborating with UN agencies and non-governmental organizations to assess and respond to the humanitarian needs of the returnees.

USAID's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance is providing \$9.5 million to the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to assist returnees in the south, through registration and verification, medical screening, protection escorts, transportation of stranded returnees, and distribution of emergency relief supplies in areas of return. In addition, USAID's Office of Food for Peace has contributed an estimated \$119 million for southern Sudan, as well as the central and eastern regions and the Three

Areas, through the UN World Food Program's (WFP) 2010 Emergency Operation. WFP is utilizing a portion of these funds to provide food rations to vulnerable returnees at their final point of destination as well as in transit areas, as needed.

Kosti town in White Nile state is the main transit point for the returnees. USAID is funding child protection, shelter, and water, sanitation, and hygiene activities at the Kosti transit center.

The way station in Jebel Kujur, located approximately 2.5 miles south of Juba, continues to receive returnees transiting Central Equatoria state by barge or via government-organized flights from Khartoum. The SSRRC and USAID/OFDA grantee IOM continue to transport arriving air passengers and vulnerable people transiting the Juba Port via barge to the Jebel Kujur station. At the way station, IOM and other relief agencies work to register and verify returnees, and provide warm food, safe drinking water, and health services for returnees. Within 72 hours of arrival at the way station, IOM provides onward transport to counties of origin for those who are unable to travel without assistance.♦

USAID Provides Needed Work Space for Abyei Judiciary



Residents of the Abyei area watch as a UN vehicle puts one of the USAID-supplied prefabricated units in place to house the Abyei Judiciary and Legal Council. Photo: AECOM International Sudan

As negotiations continue over the future of Sudan's contentious Abyei area along the north-south border,



USAID funding enabled the delivery in November of six prefabricated office units to house the Abyei Area Judiciary and Legal Council, an institution critical to implementing the rule of law in an area plagued by persistent conflict and a severe lack of infrastructure. Before these units arrived, the Council had to operate out of Khartoum, far from Abyei.

The 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) that ended the bloody, 22-year north-south civil war describes Abyei as “a bridge between the north and the south, linking the people of Sudan.” But in 2008, violence in Abyei nearly derailed the CPA. To end the violence, the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement and the National Congress Party signed the Abyei Roadmap agreement, which promised the initiation of peace and reconciliation, the return of people displaced by the violence to their former homes, and commitment that the parties would submit disputes over Abyei’s boundaries to an arbitration tribunal.

As a result of the Abyei Roadmap, USAID was able to partner with the newly created Abyei Area Administration (AAA) to begin providing much-needed assistance to this troubled and critically important area. The AAA is mandated to supervise and promote security and stability in the area, and to propose development and urbanization projects to the national government. But the AAA has been constrained by the town’s lack of infrastructure, which is where USAID support has been critical.

Initial USAID funding established a permanent office and residential complex for the AAA and the Abyei Legislative Council. USAID expanded its support to the Judiciary and Legal Council—with the prefabricated units to meet immediate needs, and for the long-term, by drafting plans for a permanent compound.

Being able to hear cases and resolve disputes locally rather than from afar will greatly increase the Council’s effectiveness while making the local population aware of its existence, a key aspect of establishing an effective presence and enforcing the rule of law.

Once the permanent compound is complete, the AAA will be able to use the prefabricated units to meet other governing priorities. ♦

HIV/AIDS Center Opens on Sudan-Uganda Border with USAID Assistance

On December 1, a community HIV/AIDS and Recreation Resource Center was opened with USAID assistance in the Sudan-Uganda border town of Kaya. The center will provide education on HIV/AIDS and reproductive health, counseling and testing, referrals for other services and treatment, and recreation activities for youth, such as games and educational videos.

While the center specifically targets populations most at risk of HIV infection, such as truckers and commercial sex workers, it will also serve the community in Morobo County, which is located along a major transport route serving the southern Sudan towns of Yei, Juba, Rumbek, and Wau.

Kaya is a major entry point that serves a growing population of truckers and other travellers crossing into southern Sudan from Uganda.

The center is a collaborative venture between the local community, the Government of Southern Sudan (GOSS), and USAID. The community will be actively involved in its day-to-day operations on a voluntary basis, while GOSS has provided the hospital and land where the center is located. The hospital will work jointly with the center in providing services to patients.



USAID/Sudan Deputy Mission Director Susan Fine with Morobo County Medical Officer Emmanuel Adejon at the December 1 opening of the new HIV/AIDS and Recreation Resource Center in Kaya, Sudan. Photo: Clifford Lubitz/USAID



An HIV/AIDS counselor outside the voluntary counseling and testing (VCT) room at the new HIV/AIDS and Recreation Resource Center in Kaya, Sudan. Photo: Clifford Lubitz/USAID

Local leaders in Morobo County sought establishment of the center after seeing the benefits of a similar center opened by USAID in Juba, the regional capital of southern Sudan. That center was established in July 2008 and continues to serve the Juba community.

The new center in Kaya was officially opened in a ceremony coinciding with the 22nd annual World AIDS Day. USAID/Sudan Deputy Mission Director Susan Fine, who participated in the inauguration, said she was particularly impressed by the leadership of Morobo County Commissioner Ngota Ofeni in supporting activities to prevent HIV/AIDS and provide information about the disease.

USAID plans to provide funding for approximately eight community groups in the border area for HIV education on behavior change, home-based care, and peer educator training. They will also become part of the center's collaborating group, and contribute to the center's functional organization.♦

New Program Aims to Improve Nutrition in Three Southern States

On December 6 in Juba, USAID Mission Director Bill Hammink and USAID partners launched the Southern Sudan Health, Nutrition, and Empowerment (SSHINE) program, which seeks to reduce food insecurity in southern Sudan.

This three-year development food aid program aims to improve the health and nutrition of vulnerable women and children under the age of 5 in Northern Bahr el Ghazal, Warrap, and Upper Nile states.

Activities are scheduled to begin in February 2011. The program is expected to benefit approximately 500,000 people directly and to improve the nutritional status of more than 40,000 children.

USAID partners implementing the program are the Adventist Development and Relief Agency, Food for the Hungry International, Concern Worldwide, the Malaria Consortium, Johns Hopkins University's Bloomberg School of Public Health, Nile Hope Development Forum, Africa Mission Assistance and Aweil Community Development Organization.♦



Southern Sudanese children and a woman. Photo: Richard Ojara

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